d J. 1
3 6.c.2(i)

THE

NATURE AND IMPORTANCE

OF

PREPARATORY STUDIES

PRIOR TO ENTERING ON THE

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY,

CONSIDERED:

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT LOUGHBOROUGH,

BEFORE THE GOVERNORS OF THE

General Baptists' Evangelical Academy;

ON MAT. XIII. 52.

BY D. TAYLOR.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. G. BARNARD, 57, SNOW-HILL,

FOR BUTTON AND BAYNES, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1807.

Price One Shilling.

TO THE

MINISTERS AND CHURCHES

OF THE

GENERAL BAPTISTS,

THIS PLAIN DISCOURSE,

PREACHED AND PUBLISHED

AT THE REQUEST OF THE

GOVERNORS OF THEIR ACADEMY,

Is, With great deference and respect,

Inscribed, by their affectionate

Brother and willing Servant,

For Jesus' sake,

THE AUTHOR.

A

SERMON, &c.

MAT. XIII. 52.

MY beloved and esteemed brethren, at your request, I very willingly, though with great diffidence, undertake the performance of a work, which your partiality, by assigning it to me, has made my indispensable duty. It is, "to re-"commend the General Baptists' Evangelical "Academy to the connexion at large." It would have been very gratifying to me, if some other Brother in the ministry, had undertaken this important service. But as you have appointed otherwise, I submit.

Many of you well know, that I have, two years ago, in the most unequivocal manner, expressed my inclination to decline the small active part which I have, at your request, taken

in conducting the business of this Infant-Institution; and only wait till you have opened the way, by the choice of another, to fill that department. I humbly hope, therefore, that nothing which may drop from me on this occasion, will be construed as having the most distant reference to myself, or my own advantage, in any sense or degree whatsoever.

If it be expected that I should refer you to any passage of Scripture, which may stand at the head of this discourse; let it be the words of our blessed Redeemer in

Mat. xiii. 52. "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an house-holder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things new and old."

Let us attempt briefly to illustrate the terms of this passage; and then directly proceed to our principal design. *A scribe* in the time of our Saviour, was one who wrote out the divine law. He who is, in one place, called a scribe, is, in another, called a lawyer, or a doctor, or teacher of the law*. The scribes are said to sit in Moses' seat†; or, in the chair from whence the writings of Moses were read and explained to the people. They are supposed to have had

* Compare. Mat. xxii. 35. Mark xii. 28.

† Mat. xxiii. 2.

their

their education in the schools of the prophets. They appear to have been generally of the tribe of Levi*. Their dwellings and portions, as such were provided for them by divine appointment. They had, consequently leisure to read, transcribe, and expound the law, to the greatest advantage. Being liberally provided for, among all the other tribes, they were exempt from all perplexing embarrassments, and all secular employments. They, at least, ought to have been well acquainted with the sacred writings, and abundantly qualified to expound the Old Testament to the people; and their guilt would be peculiarly aggravated, on their being found remarkably defective in understanding; or, in substituting the traditions of the Elders, for the writings of Moses and the prophets.

Our Saviour, in the passage before us, alluding to the name and employment of these teachers, says, "every scribe, instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven;" that is, every faithful teacher employed by me, who well understands the great truths and duties of *my* kingdom, shall be regarded by me, as a well instructed scribe. He who well understands the new, spiritual dispensation which I am introducing amongst men, and establishing in the world, is like a house-

* 1 Chron. xxiii. 4. xxiv. 6. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 13.

holder; or, as we should probably rather now express it, a *housekeeper*, that brings out of his treasure, a supply for the family of which he has taken the charge. A housekeeper, who is acquainted with his business, and attentive to his duty, will take care to lay in such plenty and variety of provisions for the family, as may supply them in the most convenient manner, on all proper occasions; and from these provisions, as necessity requires, will dispense among them, "things new and old." An important hint, in this connexion, to us who are called to the gospel ministry. The Lord engrave it on all our hearts!

It is obvious that the abilities of ministers to serve their people, as necessity requires, arise, principally, from their good understanding of the sacred oracles: from their being well "instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven." Without this, the spiritual provision will be frequently wanting; the *treasure* will often be very low, soon exhausted, and will contain but little variety. It is of inexpressible advantage to every minister himself, and to the people committed to his charge, that he be well furnished with knowledge in the great things of God: that he be well acquainted with every part of the will and the work of his adorable Master. The mi-

* Numb. xviii. 21, 24. Nehem. x. 37. 44.

nister

nister who well knows what is necessary for the instruction and comfort of that part of the family of Heaven, over which he is called to preside, and who is able to communicate such comfort and instruction, when necessary, is, by these means, qualified to fill his holy station to the saving benefit of men, and to the honour of God; and is, in the language of the apostle, to a reputable degree, "thoroughly furnished unto all good works*."

From this cursory view of the passage before us, I venture to suggest the following observations, from what has been now said.

I. It is highly advantageous to a minister himself, and to the people of his charge, that he be tolerably acquainted with the whole word of God; that he understand its meaning, its fulness, and all is variety. It is very injurious when any man, whether minister or not, begins slightly to treat any part of divine revelation. This is, in effect, to slight its glorious Author. The great God has indulged us with this revelation, and he justly requires our attention to every part of it. We readily acknowledge that every part of it is not, at all times, and on all occasions, of equal importance. The system of divine operation, of divine truth, and sacred

* 2 Tim. iii. 17.

duty,

duty, as revealed in the Bible, is a great whole, consisting of various parts, adapted to the different ages and circumstances of mankind. Some parts of it, are indeed, more *immediately* adapted to one age or country, than to another. But let us never forget that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*." Let us charge it upon our consciences, to remember, that "whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope†. It is the business of all ministers, as their abilities admit, and as circumstances require, to teach and declare to men, "all the counsel of God‡." This, however, they cannot do, unless they tolerably understand it. Whence this understanding, therefore, is not obtained, such ministers themselves, and the people over whom they preside, must labour under no inconsiderable disadvantages.

II. In order to obtain the knowledge mentioned above, it is necessary that every minister should, in some way be *instructed*, and *pursue*

* 2 Tim. iii, 16, 17. † Rom. xv. 4.
‡ Acts xx. 27.

some

some proper methods, for the attainment of such knowledge of the Bible. The scripture contains all the sacred furniture of a Christian minister, and contains it completely. But if the scriptures be not carefully read and understood, of what use can they be to a minister, or to his people? The Bible is, comparatively, a large book; and we shall see afterwards, that a study of it to advantage, requires some degree of previous learning, as well as to examine, and compare its different parts, and various contents; in order to be able to unfold and display the glories of it among men. Whatever must be known, must be first learnt; and whatever ought to be learnt, ought to be, for that purpose, considered, and carefully studied. Nothing can well be more absurd, or more dangerous, than to suppose that the scriptures may be understood by immediate intuition, how plain soever their principal contents confessedly are, to a minister who reads them with humble and serious attention.

A *common* degree of knowledge, however, even of the *principal* contents of the Bible, as we shall afterwards see, is not sufficient for a gospel minister. It is, therefore, of great consequence, that a minister be well acquainted with his Bible; and consequently, that he acquire that knowledge, which is requisite, in order to his studying it to the greatest advantage.

III. It

III. It is of great importance that the instruction of which we are speaking, should, if possible be obtained in *early* life. Ministers should be well acquainted with the Bible, and with all that is necessary for the interpretation of it, so far as can be, before they are plunged into the cares of the world, the perplexities of family concerns, and the business and labours of the Christian ministry. The ministry is a large, and difficult work. It consists of various important parts; all which require great and solemn exertion. Family cares are also reasonably expected to employ the minds of ministers in the future years of life; men who have not previously obtained some competent knowledge of divine things; or, who have not been led into a proper track of study and Biblical learning, seldom afterwards find capacity, health, and spirits, sufficient for the pursuit of these necessary acquisitions, with any tolerable degree of success. It is granted, that here and there a person of uncommon resolution and strength of mind, will make a progress in sacred studies even in the following parts of life, beyond what can almost be reasonably expected. But the number of these is, comparatively, very small indeed. Few, have capacities for these exertions. This is not only evident in the nature of things, but indis-

indisputably evident in fact. Hundreds, perhaps, we might say thousands, of ministers and churches, are, at this moment, witnessing the certainty of it, to their great grief and perplexity.

IV. Though few young ministers can completely acquire all the knowledge which is requisite, in the short time which is allowed for this purpose; yet, generally, a young man of tolerable abilities, may at least, obtain a moderate acquaintance with those *fundamental* things which are absolutely necessary to be known, in order to a profitable interpretation of the scriptures; and in order that he may be, in some good measure, qualified to go through the work of the Christian ministry, in all its parts, with comfort and reputation to himself, and to the satisfaction and benefit of those among whom he is called to labour. And he may be so led into a proper track of study and improvement, that he can afterwards build on the foundation which he has laid, in these preparatory labours, and, by that means can advance in Christian knowledge, with much more success in the following years of life.

Every infant-institution, of course, labours under inconveniences; and yours, which I am now sincerely recommending to the attention of all our brethren, has certainly been less beneficial,

cial, by the shortness of the time allowed to the young men, who have partaken of its advantages. In your late arrangements, however, you have, in a measure, remedied this inconvenience, by giving a longer time to the students. This, I trust, will have a very good effect. Yet when a young man has had little or no education at the grammar-school, even three years will not furnish him with any great treasure of Biblical knowledge. He may, however, if diligent, and properly treated, by steady perseverance afterwards, arise to a considerable degree of respectability and usefulness in the church of Christ.

V. It must be repeated, that when the necessary instruction is not by preparatory studies, obtained in early life, it is rarely obtained afterwards. We have already observed, that the great and complicated work of the ministry, together with family and other stated and occasional cares and labours, generally render this impracticable. Few men, after entering on the ministry, have either the time, the means, or the spirits, requisite to the pursuit of the studies of which we are now speaking, to any great extent: and for want of these acquisitions, before they enter on their public work, they are, on various occasions, throughout life, like men in fetters; and their people, through their incapacity,

city, not unfrequently suffer inconveniences, that it would be painful to me to describe.

From these observations, I think, we may fairly draw the following conclusion.

"It is very important and desirable, that "young men, who are called to labour in the "gospel ministry, should, previous to their tak- "ing the charge of a people, be possessed of "such a treasure of sacred knowledge, or, in the "words of the text, be so *instructed unto the "kingdom of God*, that at least, with due ap- "plication afterwards, they may be able to go "through the various parts of their arduous "work, with acceptance and profit to their peo- "ple: that they may be qualified, by *bringing "out of their treasure, things new and old*, to ex- "plain and teach the whole revealed will of "God, on every subject, and on every occasion, "to the advantage of their people."

It has been frequently observed, that many of the controversies by which the Christian church has been distracted, have been occasioned by mistaken conceptions of the subject of each other's meaning. I apprehend, this has sometimes been the case, with respect to the subject now under consideration. I am so fully persuaded of the advantage which results from the preparatory studies at this time recommended, that I can scarcely conceive how a wise and good man,

man, who well understands, and seriously considers, the subject, can make objections against them.

I have therefore concluded, to *avoid*, as much as possible, every thing that has the air of formal disputation: and would rather principally endeavour by an *explanation* of the nature and design of the institution in question, to obviate the difficulties which a serious person may have to encounter, in his contemplation of it, in order to give it his decided approbation. In doing this, let us endeavour, with all possible simplicity, to shew—what we do not design—what we do design—and the reasons for which such design is formed, and recommended to others.—With a few brief hints and advices, by way of conclusion.

In the first place,—What is *not* designed by this Institution.

I. By this institution, we do not design to *make* ministers. This is solely the work of God. It is his prerogative, and his only, to make men "able ministers of the New Testament*." To him we look, that he will qualify them with gifts and graces for the work; and when these gifts and graces appear in any man, we cheerfully acknowledge the kind hand of the great God in it; and to him, and to him alone, we would solemnly ascribe all the glory. But when the

* 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Lord

Lord has qualified a young man for the ministerial work; by giving him good natural abilities for thinking and speaking; when it further appears, with reasonable evidence, that this young man is truly converted, that he firmly believes the peculiar truths of the Gospel; and is a sincere and devoted follower of Jesus Christ; we think it not only unquestionably right, but of great consequence, that such should be assisted in acquiring that knowledge which may be most useful; and directed in that method of study which may be most conducive to his acceptance and usefulness, as a Christian minister.

These young men are recommended to the managers of your institution, by the churches to which they respectively belong; supposing them to possess, already, those *natural* abilities which may be cultivated to the spiritual advantage of mankind. Such cultivation is attempted; and you and others, have, in some measure, seen the effects. Surely this is a very different thing from *making* ministers.

II. We are not designing to make these young ministers, *gentlemen* *: or to enable them to live a genteel life, free from arduous labour, as hath sometimes been suggested. So far are we from

* This expression is designed to meet the objections expressed in the above language.

designing this, that we aim at the contrary. We wish to excite a desire to labour; and would give these young persons such instructions, and direct them into such a line of study and conduct, as may render their labour pleasant and successful. We wish to habituate them to labour, that a life of hard labour may be agreeable to themselves and beneficial to their future connexions. It is too evident to be denied by men of understanding, that many who are called to the ministry, for want of such previous instructions, scarcely know how to proceed, and for want of being habituated to regular exertion, contract the contrary habits of versatility and indolence, and spend their lives almost destitute of sacred knowledge. These are, consequently, seldom qualified for any important station; or for any efforts, of moment, in the advancement of truth and holiness. It is evident in fact, all invidious comparisons and reflections apart, that many who enter upon this sacred office, are so little acquainted with their own necessities, and great ignorance; have so little inclination to reading and close studies; and so little understanding of the manner in which these studies ought to be conducted, that they live and die little less than a disgrace to their holy function. The institution now recommended, brethren, is designed, by the blessing of God, to prevent these improprieties

in future, by giving the young men, whom the Lord may raise up to the ministry, suitable instructions at their setting out in the work, and by forming them to habits of industry and exertion. It may be proper to observe—

III. It is not intended to make these young ministers scholars, or men of *general learning*. We grant, that to be acquainted with all the branches of learning, is, in many departments of life, very desirable; and may be of great use in the Gospel ministry; especially on some occasions, and in some situations. It is further acknowledged, that it might be of service if *some* ministers, at all times, and in every denomination, were general and profound scholars. Yet that *all* ministers should be such, is neither practicable nor necessary; and therefore, by us, not designed.

It is not *practicable*. Many good men and good ministers, have not sufficient capacities for the attainment of it. A good acquaintance with all the various branches of literature cannot be obtained without great labour, and strength of mind; nor without much more time than many ministers can employ in literary studies. And those who have not been favoured in providence, with the advantage of a good school education, are yet less able to make any such proficiency in learning.

Nor is it *necessary* that all Gospel ministers should be men of general learning. A man may be a very useful minister without it. Unquestionably, many are such, and have been such in all ages. *Biblical* learning is *principally* needed by a minister; because it ought to be his great concern always "to speak as the oracles of God." And this may be done without any great measure of general learning. It cannot be denied that many, whose acquaintance with philosophical and mathematical learning, for instance, is very superficial, have, notwithstanding, a much more profound and extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, in all their parts, than many others, who have pursued the study of human science with the greatest success. If disquisitions of this kind were proper on the present occasion, it were easy to account for what we have now asserted*. On this conviction, therefore, you think it proper to decline the attempt to make your young men masters of general learning: and, by no means, consider this as the object of your *design*, in the institution which we are recommending on the present occasion.

It may be proper, however, before we dismiss this part of the subject, to observe, that where great advances have been made by minis-

* For an account of the learning that is necessary for a minister, see Dr. Watts's Improvement of the Mind. Chapter XX.

ters, in human learning, they are not to be esteemed as prejudicial. Great learning is not to be considered as inconsistent with the sincerest piety: but may be employed to advantage in the interest of our blessed Redeemer, for the advancement of evangelical holiness. The Baxters, the Bateses, the Wattses, the Doddridges, the Gills, the Herveys, and thousands of others, in all ages, have given abundant proof, that high attainments in learning are perfectly consistent with the warmest Christian zeal and devotion.

As we have already distinguished, and may keep the distinction in view, between natural abilities and acquisitions in learning, it may not be improper, for the sake of *some*, to explain what we mean by the former: though such an explanation can seldom be necessary. We mean, such powers of mind, as a young man may possess, without any learning. Such are a taste for reading and study: a capacious and retentive memory; a readiness of apprehension; a power of thinking clearly and closely; an aptitude for solid reasoning; a sound judgment; a command of his own imagination, to keep it under due restraint; and a strength of mind, that can bear much regular thinking. When these powers are manifest in young men, and carefully improved by them, for a due length

of time, under the direction of a wise and laborious instructor, such young men, if deeply impressed with the fear and love of God, are likely to make useful ministers of Jesus Christ. *All* who have been admitted to institutions of this kind, never did possess nor can reasonably be expected to possess, all these *natural capacities* in an eminent degree. But where they are discovered, it is a strong inducement to give such young minds all the cultivation which circumstances will permit, as we have reason to believe that they will pursue Biblical learning with much greater success, and employ it to much better advantage, than those, whose natural abilities are far inferior.

Having thus observed what we do *not* design by the institution now in question; we go on to mention,—Secondly, What *is* the design of it: or in what we apprehend, young ministers ought to be principally instructed; and the benefits which may be expected to result from such an institution.

I. Many things learnt in childhood, are necessary to be *corrected* in most young men; which would otherwise be injurious to them.—Many vulgar opinions, learnt from their parents, their nurses, and their companions.—Many disagreeable *habits*, contracted in early life: habits of sauntering, trifling, and even of

indolence; instead of those of diligence, and the proper improvement of time. Habits of impertinence and sauciness, instead of those of humility and modesty. Many instances of false pronunciation; and whatever tends to render their services unpleasant or unprofitable. A detail of all the improprieties, which generally prevail in uneducated young men, would take up too much of our present time. But it cannot be rationally denied that they all ought to be corrected in a minister, as early as possible.

II. By institutions of this kind, young ministers obtain the privilege of retiring from the bustle of the world: and of giving up themselves, for a time, to serious and close reflexion. Many persons never enjoy this privilege; and, therefore, never learn to *think*, to any valuable purpose. They seem not to know the value of attentive consideration; nor how to set about it, when they do, in some measure, know its value. Hence they live and die, with their minds utterly uncultivated.

With the advantage of retirement, under the direction of a wise tutor, they are brought into a train, and contract a habit, of regular attention, of which, many uneducated ministers know but little, to the end of life. Their own minds are, consequently, strangely barren, and their people are in a pitiable condition for want of

better instruction. A few years retirement under the eye of a proper tutor, and diligently improved, are of incalculable value.

III. We wish to convince young ministers, of what many of them, and many others, seem not to understand: what kinds of knowledge are necessary to render them respectable and useful in their sacred employment. It cannot be rationally denied, that a man, who is ignorant of his own mother tongue, cuts an awkward figure in a pulpit. His pronunciation frequently erroneous; his language destitute of propriety and precision; frequently transgressing the plainest rules of concord and government; not to mention the higher qualities of style. Surely a man, who speaks in public, ought to understand these elementary things, respecting which, an acute school-boy, of ten years old, would easily detect his errors. Yet it is well known, that, for want of this elementary knowledge, many ministers have exposed themselves to ridicule: and their ministrations, which were, otherwise, far above contempt, have been forsaken by men of tolerable understanding and refinement.

We grant that there is no necessity for ministers to take up much of their time in *polishing* their discourses. This is seldom of much use; nor is it, by any means, what we wish, at least,

on common occasions, to recommend. Ministers, who have used the greatest *plainness of speech*, have, generally been the most useful, and the most respected. But I trust, we all are able to distinguish between plainness and impropriety. The former we wish to inculcate and remommend. The latter we wish to correct; as that which ought, by all means, to be avoided. To express divine things in proper language, however plain, seems to be one of the first qualifications of a good preacher. We are encouraged in this endeavour, by the correctness of our present translation of the Bible, which, I believe, all capable judges admit, is in this respect, one of the best standards of the English language.

It is, indeed, highly important, that ministers should be, if possible, masters of elocution, in all its extent, as it includes all the varieties of style and composition, all the various methods of instruction, reasoning, and persuasion, suitable to every occasion of addressing mankind. This, however, is an object that requires some time and considerable labour. But I am happy in being able to state, that your institution embraces every thing, so far as time and ability permit, which is included in this general idea of elocution; and, as such, is exceedingly important and valuable.

In reading the Bible, which is the grand treasury, whence a minister must derive all his instructions, we frequently meet with the names of places in which events took place; and in such connexions as render it necessary, or very convenient, to know where those places are. Nor can it be denied, that, if this be generally neglected by persons who have the opportunity of knowing, such neglect is so far a slight of the glorious author of the Bible, by whom they are so particularly mentioned. This, therefore, ought to be made a part of a young minister's preparatory studies; because, otherwise, he must read a large part of the Bible with little understanding, and, of consequence, with little advantage.

We, likewise, in reading the sacred Scriptures, frequently find *times* mentioned. It is certain, the Holy Spirit, who dictated the Scriptures, intended that we should enquire and understand, what *times* these were, and what relation they have to other times, before or after them. These *times*, therefore, ought to be well understood, in order to make the proper use of the passages in which they are mentioned. Nor can we have any consistent or satisfactory view of Scripture history, without this branch of knowledge.

It is a common observation, that " Geography

and Chronology are the eyes of history." On the same principle, we may certainly say, that "the geography and chronology of Scripture are the eyes of Scripture history." Now we know that a great part of the Bible is historical; and yet ought to be understood by ministers. But this understanding, most of them will probably never obtain, unless they are instructed in it in their preparatory studies. Many will, afterwards, neither have the time, nor the spirits nor the means that are requisite, for these inquiries. The institution which secures to them times and means for these studies, must, therefore, be an unspeakable advantage to themselves, and to the churches.

It is further evident, that, we cannot read the Scriptures without observing a frequent reference to various *customs* of different nations, very different from any with which we are acquainted. To understand those Scriptures, which allude to these customs, it is necessary to know what these customs were; and, to know this, it is requisite that we have recourse to the *antiquities* of the nations in which they prevailed. They are principally, those of the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans. There are many passages of Scripture, of the meaning of which we can scarcely form any judgment at all, without the previous knowledge of these

customs. But for obtaining this knowledge, considerable time and labour are requisite: much more than ministers can generally employ, after they have entered upon the pastoral office. Hence, most ministers who have not these previous advantages, live and die without this useful branch of sacred knowledge. To prevent this, as far as may be, in ministers who may be raised up among you, is one object of your valuable institution.

While we are speaking of Biblical knowledge, it may be reasonably expected, that we mention the *learned languages;* especially the *Greek* and *Hebrew,* in which the Holy Scriptures were written. The state of your institution has been such, that your students have not had sufficient *time* to make any great progress in these languages; though we may venture to say, that the progress which several of them have made is considerable. When we take a view of the time and pains, they have found requisite in order to obtain a competent acquaintance with the English tongue, and with several other branches of useful knowledge, we need not hesitate in asserting, that the knowledge of the original languages of Scripture, which *they* have obtained is beyond reasonable expectation. But, as you have determined to allow another year, or more, to students in future,

when circumstances do not forbid it, they will now have more opportunity for learning *Greek* and *Hebrew*, should you think it proper to encourage them in these studies.

As it is the opinion, however, of many capable judges, that the knowledge of the original languages is not *absolutely* necessary for ministers, I beg leave to state, that, we, at present wish, rather to consider this branch of sacred learning, as an *appendage* to the preparatory acquisitions of young ministers, than as a substantial *part* of them. Yet, if I may be permitted to give my private opinion on the subject, I beg leave to say, that, if we should consider this knowledge, as merely an *appendage*, I think it is an appendage of no small value. Great satisfaction, and many advantages, may be derived from reading the Scriptures in their original languages, though it would be carrying the matter much too far, to assert, that, no minister can, without this knowledge, arrive at a competent acquaintance with the doctrines and duties of Christianity, which "are able to make us wise to salvation." Few have ventured seriously to affirm this; and fact plainly demonstrates the contrary*.

Shall

* Yet the learned and pious Dr. Watts, whose name demands our reverence, says, "Those that design the sacred profession of theology should make it their labour of chief importance to be very conversant with their Bibles, both in the Old and New Testament: and this requires

Shall I be permitted to say further, it is of high importance to the church and to the world, that ministers be acquainted with the art and rules of true *criticism;* and *habituated* to read and study the Holy Scriptures with diligence and *critical* attention *. Without this, they

quires some knowledge of those original languages, Greek and Hebrew in which the Scriptures are written. All that will pursue these studies with honour, should be able to read the Old Testament tolerably in the Hebrew tongue: at least, they should be so far acquainted with it, as to find out the sense of a text by the help of a dictionary. But scarce any man should be thought worthy of the name of a solid divine or a skilful teacher of the Gospel, in these days of light and liberty, unless he has a pretty good knowledge of the Greek: Since all the important points of the Christian religion are derived from the New Testament, which was first written in that language."——Works, 4to. V. 5, p. 309, 310.

* Having mentioned *criticism*, against which some vulgar minds have so many strange and unaccountable prejudices, I here transcribe a few lines, by way of *explanation*, from the writings of two of the greatest and best of men. "The art of criticism is reckoned by some as a distinct part of philology; but it is in truth, nothing else than a more exact and accurate knowledge or skill in the other parts of it, and a readiness to apply that knowledge upon all occasions, in order to judge of what relates to these subjects, to explain what is obscure, in the authors which we read, to supply what is defective, and amend what is erroneous in manuscripts and ancient copies, to correct the mistakes of authors and editors in the sense of the words, to reconcile the controversies of the learned, and by this means, to spread a juster knowledge of these things among the inquisitive part of mankind.

"Every man who pretends to the learned professions, (law, medicine, and divinity), if he do not arise to be a critic himself in philological matters, he should be frequently conversing with those books, whether dictionaries, paraphrasts, commentators, or other critics, which may relieve any difficulties he meets with, and give him a more

exact

they are in continual danger of propagating gross absurdities, by a wrong construction put upon detached parts, which a familiar acquaintance with the whole might easily prevent. But it is very difficult, if not impossible, to contract this invaluable habit of critical and attentive reading and study, amidst the pressure of business, often attended with many secular inconveniences, if the foundation of it have not been laid in youth and retirement. The institution we now recommend is happily adapted for this very important purpose.

We may say, without hesitation, that composing sermons for the instruction of mankind, is a principal part of a minister's business. I do not here say, *writing* sermons; though I make no scruple to give it as my opinion, that if *young* ministers were more attentive to *writing* sermons than many of them are, they would be abundantly recompensed for their labour. At least, to write large, full, and correct skeletons of sermons, would be of unspeakable advantage to themselves, and to the people they are called to serve. I would not advise young ministers

exact acquaintance with those studies which he pursues." Dr. Watts's Works, 4to Vol. v. p. 315.

"The New Testament is a book written with the most consummate knowledge of human nature. There are a thousand latent beauties in it, which it is the business and glory of true criticism to place in a strong point of light." Doddridge's Fam. Expos. Vol. i. pref.

in

in common to *read* their sermons, nor, except on extraordinary occasions, to confine themselves to the thoughts which they have penned in their skeletons. But without *reading* their sermons, or confining themselves to their skeletons, they will find, upon trial, that great advantage results from large and careful writing.

It has often appeared, however, that unless this practice is begun in early life, it is seldom afterwards taken up to any great purpose. It is a practice that requires much consideration, to write upon divine subjects for the instruction of mankind. It requires a habit of close coherent thinking; which is not easily contracted in advanced years, amidst the labours even of the Christian ministry, as a considerable quantity of time is requisite for it. Nor will men, in such circumstances, generally, make any great *improvement* in it. Whereas, were they to commence this practice, before they are much employed in preaching, with the suitable instructions and corrections of a wise and pious tutor, they would soon perceive how to take up a subject *naturally* and properly; they would make a progress in the art of composition, and regular study, which would, to persons of discernment, and in a measure to all, render their ministerial labours useful and acceptable, even long after the vigour of youth shall decline.

In

In an age, like the present, in which infidelity so awfully prevails, and evangelical truth is so much despised, it is very desirable that young ministers should have their faith grounded on the most firm foundation, and confirmed by the clearest evidence. Thus they will be able on all occasions, not only to "give a reason of the hope that is in them", but to instruct and to fortify the minds of others. But this, like all their business, requires time, retirement, exertion, and assistance. The divinity and contents of the Christian revelation, are to be illustrated by ministers throughout life; and it is a matter of infinite consequence that ministers be well informed on these great and extensive subjects; as the success of their ministry, and the salvation of men, are inseparably connected with the belief and practice of what this revelation contains: and, where this revelation is granted, no salvation can be enjoyed to those who oppose or disregard its contents. An opportunity for these studies, is, therefore, of infinite value to young ministers. Only a few months, diligently employed on these subjects, if this diligence be continued, as it ought to be, afterwards, will probably be reflected upon with pleasure and gratitude, in the most solemn and closing scenes of life.

Controversial preaching is, indeed, seldom

 profitable

profitable to the generality of hearers; and a minister who understands his business, will seldom find it necessary. But without the formality of disputation, a well-qualified minister, who has carefully read and diligently studied the scriptures, will be able, in some good measure, to imitate the prophets, our blessed Saviour, and his apostles, in obviating objections, solving difficulties, establishing the truths, and enforcing the duties of Christianity, to the satisfaction, and salvation of those who hear him.

Most of my hearers must have observed, that the sacred writers frequently illustrate spiritual things by natural. It is, therefore, necessary that these *natural* things be, in a good measure, understood by ministers. Without this knowledge, not only the beauties, but even the meaning of many passages, cannot be discovered. Yet this part of study, like most that we have mentioned, requires more time, more books, more instruction, and more vigorous exertion, than can be expected from the generality of ministers; without such *previous* advantages, as those for which we are now pleading. To say, "ministers ought to study these various subjects afterwards," is to say nothing. The generality of ministers cannot do it. They have not leisure, nor books, nor health, nor spirits, sufficient to enable them to pursue these studies to any considerable

siderable degree. Their circumstances render it impossible to procure the necessary instructions. The labours of the pastoral office, and their many unavoidable avocations forbid their making the progress which is requisite, or at least, very desirable.

What some superior minds are capable of doing, can never be fairly alledged as an argument against the truth or design of these observations. Some are blessed with capacities for almost any thing. But, I am firmly of opinion, that not one minister in twenty is able to acquire the knowledge which all ministers ought to have, without the advantage of previous study and instruction,

Supposing we admit that, sometimes, a young man of uncommon abilities, health, spirits, and resolution, may, by incessant labour, amidst the pressure of his ministerial, and other concerns, be able to make a tolerable progress in these elementary parts of Biblical knowledge; yet, such young man will acquire this knowledge, only to an inferior degree, and in the course of many years: and by far the greatest part of *such* ministers make scarcely any regular progress at all. I believe it will be acknowledged by capable judges, that a young man of capacity and diligence, would, in three years' time, by such an institution as I wish your's to be, acquire as

much of this elementary knowledge, as another, of equal capacity and diligence, would acquire in fifteen or twenty years, in the intervals of his ministerial labours, as a pastor of a moderately numerous congregration. It ought to be likewise observed, that these are the best fifteen or twenty years of his life. And most ministers find these studies, without proper assistance, so fatiguing and difficult, that they are frequently tempted to relinquish them at middle-age; and so never arrive at any thing like perfection in the knowledge of those subjects which they have begun to study. Whereas, when a young man has laid a pretty good foundation in early life, by retirement, previous instruction, and regular study, he has mastered most of the principal difficulties, has contracted the habit of methodical proceeding; and the way to *advance* in these important branches of knowledge, is, to him, comparatively, smooth and easy. He can mingle, at proper intervals, these studies with those which are daily incumbent upon him, and proceed in them with delight and success.

Here may be a proper place to mention some of the grand sources, from which the sacred writers derive their images and figurative language and, which, therefore, ought to be carefully studied by every minister.

The first source is, the works of nature, or the various

various parts of the creation. By these the grace and will of God and the dispensations of providence, are strikingly reprensented to us; especially throughout the Psalms, and the prophetic writings.—Light, darkness, the sun, the moon, the stars; dew, rain, streams, rivers, floods, torrents, inundations; fire, wind, lebanon, carmel; rams, lions, eagles, and many others, are objects alluded to in a great variety of connexions, to represent the dispensations of God towards men.

Another source is, the various occupations, and customs of men, at the times when the scriptures were written.—Agriculture, and its various implements; the vintage; the management of cattle; the employment of the shepherds; the customs of mourners, and modes of interment; the barbarous treatment of captives; the conjugal relation; the stupefying effects of intoxicating liquors; the method of refining metals; the methods of building; with many others. All which should be diligently studied and well understood by Christian ministers, as the knowledge of them is requisite, for the illustration of a great number of passages in holy scripture.

The Jewish worship, rites and ceremonies; together with the idolatrous worship of neighbouring heathen nations, are frequently alluded

to by the sacred writers. They furnish many fine figurative representations; and open a large field of profitable and delightful study to young ministers. Ministers should endeavour to be well acquainted with the various parts of the service performed in the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple; the sheckinah; the mercy-seat; the whole ceremonial law; the Jewish distinctions between things clean and unclean; the killing of the sacrifices, and feasting upon them; the pontifical robes; the pots, and other vessels, and utensils, used by the Jewish worshippers. Nor should ministers be ignorant of the idolatrous worship of the heathen nations, to which the sacred writers so frequently allude;—their groves, their high places; their various idols, and so on.

We add, many of the figures and images of holy scripture, are borrowed from history, especially, from the *sacred* history. As the fall of angels; the chaotic state of nature; the deluge; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of the enemies of the Israelites, in neighbouring nations; the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; the descent of Jehovah on Mount Sinai; and many other parts of the history of the Bible. These are not only narrated as historic facts, but alluded to for various practical purposes. Nor can the allusions be well understood, without a

familiar

familiar acquaintance with the facts! To slight these subjects, as unworthy of diligent study and attention, is not only to deprive ourselves of some of the most delightful and interesting treasures, which the human mind can possess: it is little less than offering a direct insult against the Lord Almighty, who has directed them to be recorded for our instruction. But how can ministers pursue these studies to any effect, without time, labour, books and other assistance?

On this occasion, we cannot, with propriety, omit to mention the *variety* and solemn *importance* of ministerial labours. They require considerable understanding, as well as great discretion; and yet, are so momentous, so numerous, and so various, that they generally allow very little time for those extra or elementary studies, for which I am now pleading. The apostle's exhortation to Timothy, is enough to strike terror through the heart of a conscientious minister. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead; preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine*."

Can it be supposed, on the slightest view of this tremendous charge, that a young man, com-

* 2 Tim, iv, 1, 2.

ing raw from the world, is qualified to enter immediately on this solemn undertaking? Can he preach the *word* to the best advantage, when, perhaps, he has scarcely ever read the Bible once through, with a view to understand its contents? Is he fit to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," before he has deliberately studied the relations, duties, and dispositions of mankind? It is readily granted that the capacities of men differ greatly; and that some have enjoyed advantages, by school-education far superior to those of others. These, unquestionably, are more able to go on with reputation, and benefit to others, in the different parts of the Christian ministry. But common sense will convince us, that even *these* would better discharge the various duties of their office, had they been favoured with sufficient previous instructions, in the preparatory studies which we are now recommending. Ministers themselves feel, and frequently acknowledge; and wish, in vain, for such advantages, for more understanding, and more leisure for study.

It cannot, however, be dissembled, though it is a melancholy reflection, that many are employed in the ministry, who have no uncommon abilities, and have enjoyed almost no education at school. Had these worthy men been indulged with a few years' retirement from the world,

which

which they might have employed in the preparatory studies above mentioned, they might have been useful to a degree, to which they will *now*, in all probability, never arrive. Nay, it is a *fact*, that some of them are so conscious of their incapacity, that they are often afraid, especially, on particular occasions, of undertaking any important part of their great work; and many parts of it, are performed by them, in a manner which is by no means reputable to themselves, or very beneficial to the people.

In a word, ministers are called to give instruction, advice, direction, on every sacred subject, when necessary, and on almost every occasion. They are called to prove, and to vindicate divine truth, and to recommend it, in its simplicity and purity, to the reception of mankind. They have to exhort, admonish, reprove, persons of different characters, in different circumstances, and of different dispositions; "in season, and out of season," in the pulpit and the parlour, and at stated and occasional interviews. They are called to preside over the affairs of the church, and to deliver "the word of life" to sinners. What a treasure of sacred knowledge is requisite for all! It is of great consequence that ministers be ready and able, on every occasion, to "bring out of their treasury, things new and old." We may well exclaim, with the apostle,

"Who

"Who is sufficient for these things?" Who, especially, can be thought sufficient for them, if he have not enjoyed the advantage of retirement, preparatory studies, and suitable instructions? Can men teach what they do not understand? Can men obtain understanding without time and means? Can a young man, coming raw from manual labour, be supposed to have had either time or means, for the knowledge which is requisite for a work of such extent, such variety, and such awful importance? The institution for which I wish to be an humble advocate, is of vast moment, to ministers, to churches, to the whole connexion.

It might, perhaps, have been, with more propriety, mentioned before; it ought not, however, to be forgotten, that a considerable part of scripture is *prophetic*. The prophecies and their accomplishment, not only prove the divinity of scripture—they highly prove its holy tendency; and greatly illustrate, confirm, and enforce, the un-figured contents of it. Of those prophecies which relate to popery, contained in the Book of Daniel, of Revelations, and in some of the Epistles, this may be said particularly. But the prophecies have no small difficulties in them. They require considerable learning and labour. Their peculiar phraseology, as we have seen above, tends to obscure the sense of them;

and

and to us, ignorant creatures, this seems a great evidence of the wisdom of their adorable Author, whose "understanding is infinite." It is, however, of no small moment, that these should be, in some good measure, understood, both by ministers and churches. There are rules for expounding, consistently, these, as well as other parts of scripture. Ministers should know, and carefully attend to these rules. But they should have time for it, as well as other means. This time, and these means are not to be generally expected, unless in the years of retirement for which we are now pleading.

There are many other branches of useful knowledge, which are desirable for ministers, and which, as far as circumstances permit, demand their attention. But these, though valuable, do not come within the limits of your useful institution. In this, to understand and wisely and faithfully to preach, the word, is "*all in all.*"

Finally, old age will come. The vivacity of youth may, perhaps, enable a person of uncommon spirits, penetration and diligence, to perform his work with *comparative* reputation, so long as that vivacity continues. But how frequently does it happen, that such ministers as have not the furniture here recommended, grow almost useless, when that vivacity is gone? Whereas, a real *treasure* of sacred knowledge is

not

not so soon exhausted. Even in advanced age, those who possess it, may, in some respects, be, still, even more useful than many of their brethren. If they have not the energy of youth, they have intellectual endowments, which enable them to give instructions on various subjects, and on various occasions, and to give them with propriety, with precision, and with evidence, both in the pulpit and out of it; and their age and experience give weight and effect to all they teach. By these the church of Christ may, in some respects, receive the greatest advantage. Early instructions, and preparatory studies, diligently improved, may render an aged minister very useful to the latest period of his life.

I believe, it is more than time that we hasten towards a close, dropping, as we proceed, without much enlargement, a few general considerations and advices.

1. Let me intreat you to *consider* what has been said; and so far as it is right, to act upon it. If the institution in question be proper and valuable, let us engage cordially, steadily, and with energy, to support it. As I am persuaded of the truth and force of what has been said, I am very far from wishing to evade the strictest examination of every part of it. But we are apt to think partially and superficially. I hope, brethren, we shall give the subject the attention

it

it deserves. I am happy in being able to say, with great pleasure, that we have several ministers, who have not, to any extent, enjoyed the privileges for which I have been pleading; and yet, by unremitting diligence and application, accompanied with the divine blessing, are so well qualified for the office of the ministry, that their performances need not fear the strictest scrutiny. But, I appeal to all my brethren, if the knowledge which we have above briefly mentioned, be not necessary for a minister.—Let us place the question, if possible in the most obvious light; if it be profitable, if desirable; ought we not, most cordially, to unite in the support of an institution, which secures so many advantages to our ministers and churches?

2. Consider the opinions and proceedings of wise and good men, respecting the subject in question. Consider the schools of the ancient prophets.—The labours of our Lord, in instructing his disciples, before he sent them forth to preach his word, besides the rich extraordinary effusion of his holy Spirit—consider with what assiduity the Christian church, in many ages, especially, since the Reformation, has endeavoured that her ministers might be well "instructed"—Consider how earnestly the different denominations of professing Christians have pursued, and are pursuing, the same important object.

object. And are not those who are most ardent in this pursuit, the most judicious, the most pious, and the best of men? Surely, we shall all say to ourselves, and to each other, "Let us go, and do likewise."

3. Consider how all men act, in every other department of life. Do not all men see the propriety and even necessity, of acquiring some good degree, at least, of *elementary* knowledge, in the business of that department which they wish to fill? Do not all parents see the necessity of this for their children? What are the long apprenticeships that are served for every branch of trade, but demonstrations of the wisdom and advantage of acquiring a competent degree of understanding in the business in which we mean to be employed? Does not the voice of all mankind, in this instance, confirm the impropriety, and even folly, of undertaking a work, for which we are not, in some measure, prepared, by a competent degree of previous knowledge? Why are men so long attentive to preparatory instructions, before they commence the practice of law, or medicine? Of all professions, that of the Christian ministry is, incomparably, the most difficult, and most important; and the effects of it, the most tremendous of all in which mortals are, or can be employed. On every account, therefore, the preparatory instructions

tions for which we plead, are, in the highest degree, desirable.

4. Consult the men who are most richly furnished for the ministerial work. Men of genuine piety, of evangelical principles, of real Christian experience; men of the best natural parts, who have been the most useful to mankind; men, who have had the best education; who have made the greatest progress in sacred learning. What do these men say? Surely they are worthy to be heard, if any are. Do they think, *they* know more than is requisite? Do they not frequently acknowledge that they are still defective? They do. These, perhaps, above all men, see the value of *Biblical* learning, and of prepatory instructions and studies.

5. Consult a different class of ministers; and of ministers, who are, to a degree, useful, in the sacred office: whose natural abilities are not of the superior kind; and who have not enjoyed the benefit of much education. These worthy brethren have a tolerable understanding of some *plain parts* of scripture; and which is of the first importance, on the whole, their hearts are right in the sight of God." But as to many other parts of scripture, they can scarcely guess at their meaning; and are not able to deliver their thoughts on the plainest passages, in a way that is agreeable to persons whose understandings

ings are cultivated. These deeply feel their want of that assistance which we here recommend; and of which, we sincerely wish, that if possible, none of our ministers may, in future, be destitute.

6. Consider the conduct of our churches on many public occasions, when we have large congregations. Are not ministers of superior furniture, at those times, generally employed, and others kept out of sight? This conduct of our churches is, unquestionably proper. But does it not demonstrate the necessity and value of ministerial furniture, even in *our own* estimation, in order to recommend the truths of the gospel to men of all characters, in such a manner as that "those who seek occasion, may not find occasion" to reject them. Does not this sentiment, by the most obvious consequence, recommend the Institution now in question?

It is readily acknowledged, brethren, that evangelical truth is superior, in value, to every thing that can be compared with it. The *gospel*, and the gospel ALONE," is the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth*." It is acknowledged, further, that ministers who are truly converted, and vigorous in the cause of Christ, who are men of fervent devotion, and

* Rom. i. 16.

preach

preach the genuine gospel, though not eminent for extensive Biblical knowledge, may, in many respects, be very useful. They are far superior as ministers of Christ, to any who have nothing more than human learning to recommend them, though these could speak like angels. But after all, you will certainly allow, that ministers who are truly alive to God, firm friends to evangelical truth, men of real piety; if these are well qualified to instruct and advise on most subjects, and on most occasions; if they can write, with acceptance, in defence of the gospel, and for the instruction of mankind; if they are well able to assist in the education of the rising generation; and to unite in every important concern which relates to the promotion of religion, these ministers are qualified to be much more useful, than those who can be employed, and that very imperfectly, in only one of these departments.

From all these different views of the subject, my brethren, I conclude, without the least hesitation, that the Institution for which you have done me the honour of making me your humble advocate, deserves high estimation; and justly demands the support and exertion of every member of the General Baptist connexion. May it rise, and encrease in honour and utility, from year to year. May the best blessings of Heaven

be enjoyed by its friends! May all its managers, and those who any way unite in conducting it, be continually filled with the fear and love of God; and always under divine direction! May the God of the Spirits of all flesh, raise up many eminent young men to partake of its advantages! May the benefits resulting from it, extend far and wide; and may it flourish to the latest generations! Amen.

May I, brethren, so far presume upon your patience and candour, as to hope that you will take it in good part, if I, with all deference and respect, assume the liberty of suggesting, what, I think, should be sought after, as qualities, in the person who shall be your tutor, in this Institution. I venture, with submission to your judgments, to say, I apprehend, your tutor will be better qualified to serve Christ and our connexion, in that capacity, if he be—

A man of *middle age*; beyond the indiscretions to which young men are liable; experienced in the labours and trials of the ministry; yet not very aged, lest he fail in the vigour and energy requisite in so high and holy a function.

If his constitution be moderately *healthy*; that he may bear the fatigues which will naturally attend this important service.

If he be a man of strict *temperance;* both

as

as a good example to the young men under his care, and as one that will be always, regularly attentive to the high concerns of the Institution.

If he gives indubitable evidence of his *conversion* to God. The best abilities, under the influence of a bad heart, will only make him a better tool for Satan, and a disgrace to his sacred office: while a mind truly and habitually *serious*, will direct his talents to the best employments, and the most profitable methods of proceeding.

It will be well if he be a man of *general* knowledge; but, especially, he ought to be acquainted with *philology* in all its branches, because to make your young men well acquainted with it is one of your principal objects. He ought also to possess a competent knowledge of *Biblical* literature in all its parts, because he must, in one way or another, be teaching this continually, and should never lose sight of it. On this account, he ought not to be a man that understands it only. If he do not take a *delight* in it, he is in danger of being too much diverted from it; and will scarcely go through the labours which the tuition of young men in the knowledge of it demands.

It is of peculiar consequence that he be an *evangelical* teacher. The *peculiar* doctrines, and directions of the gospel are and ever have been

the great means of converting sinners, and promoting true religion. If our young men do not come out, deeply impressed with the truth of this indisputable fact, we cannot rationally hope to see them useful, let their abilities or acquisitions be whatever they may. A tutor, therefore, should inculcate this truth, with all possible assiduity.

He should be a man of considerable *strength of mind.* Able to meet difficulties without discouragement; to take up *deep* enquiries, and to go through *various* kinds of labours with resolution, and without distraction.

He ought to be a man that can *communicate* instruction in an *easy* and happy manner. Well acquainted with all the different forms of address, and with all the various modes of reasoning; that the *evidence* of all his instructions may, as much as possible, strike the minds of his pupils at the first sight.

In short; he must be a man of *diligence* and *perseverance* possessed of much *patience,* not soon offended, or easily discouraged; a man of *self-denial,* who seeks not his own things, but the things of Jesus Christ; kind and *condescending,* ready to stoop to any thing, by which he can honour his great Master, edifying his pupils, and serve the churches of Christ; a man that

mingles

mingles gentleness and *cheerfulness* with *gravity;* that he may maintain a proper *dignity* of character among his pupils, and yet have nothing forbidding in his carriage or manner; but be always easy of *access;* a man of *moderation*, both in *principles* and *temper*, that he pass no unreasonable censures, be not too *rigorous* in his demands, nor too sanguine in his expectations.—Above all; he must be a man that "loves our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

To conclude: If this institution be, indeed, valuable, as we have endeavoured to prove; let us all unite our exertions for its support. We may meet with difficulties. We may even meet with opposition; for what good thing is there, which some are not weak enough, or wicked enough, to oppose? Let us remember too, the power of prejudice. It is one of the most unreasonable things in the world. But it will grow weaker, as consideration and conviction take place. In the mean time, it is our duty and interest to exercise patience and perseverance. One means of support is, by contribution of our possessions, on all proper occasions. You who are "rich in this world," can do much in the way of contribution; and so, "lay up much treasure in heaven." But, whether rich or poor, there are few, who, by contributions or other means, cannot do

do something. This Institution invites, demands, deserves our united endeavours. Our adorable Master's interest is very materially concerned in it. Remember he *died* for our sins. He gave *himself* for us. He requires our united endeavours, and will abundantly reward them. "Let none of us, therefore, be weary in well-doing: for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not." We can *all* particularly contribute to the support and prosperity of it, by our daily earnest prayers. Forget not this important concern at the throne of grace."

Shall I venture to address one word to the managers? Brethren, you are engaged in a very honourable work, though it may, at some times, prove an arduous one. But, "gird up the loins of your minds," and fear not. The eyes of your glorious Master are upon you, and he will not fail to help you. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." If possible, be always at hand, when your presence is wanted. Labour to be unanimous. Do every thing with sincerity, energy, love, prudence, and fervent prayer; and may "the Spirit of God and of glory rest upon you!" Amen.

FINIS.

J. G. Barnard, Printer, Snow-Hill.